

2023-0 The Vikram Betal Stories

Translation by Veeraswamy Krishnaj.
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The Betal Panchavimshati, also known as the Vikram Betal Stories, is an ancient collection of Indian tales featuring a King and a Ghost. Originally written in Sanskrit, these stories have gained international popularity. They have been translated into various languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, English, and Marathi. Each narrative carries a moral lesson for the audience.

The stories revolve around the King of Ujjain, Vikramaditya or Vikram, who promises to bring a ghost named Betal to a sage to aid him in his prayers. However, Betal agrees to accompany Vikram on one condition. During their journey, Betal tells the king a story and poses a question at the end. If Vikram answers correctly, Betal returns to his tree. If Vikram remains silent knowingly, he forfeits his life. Only when Vikram genuinely does not know the answer, he can take Betal to the sage. Thus, the journey of Vikram and Betal begins.

The Vikram Betal Stories comprise an intriguing collection of tales that culminate in thought-provoking questions. Delve into this historical treasure and enjoy listening to these stories with

children and the rest of the family.

Another version:

Vikram was the king. Betāl was the Vedalam, the ghost and the storyteller. King Vikram must give the correct answer. If not, the king's head would explode into 100 pieces. If he gave the correct answer, the ghost will fly off his shoulder to its refuge the moringa tree, thereby frustrating Vikram to take Batal to its destination.

Vedalam is the analogue of west's Vampire. (Betall-Badal-Bedal-Betal-Vedalam-Vetālam = the ghost)

Here is a detailed story.

King Vikram held court and received gifts from the visitors. A mendicant gave him a fruit on every visit, which the king handed over to the royal storekeeper. One day, the fruit broke while being handled, and a ruby came out. The king ordered all the fruits to be examined. All the stored fruits yielded rubies.

The king wanted to meet the mendicant, who proposed to meet him under a banyan tree in the center of the cremation ground on the outskirts of the city on the 14th day of the dark half of the month. The king met him under the tree. The mendicant asked the king to go to the northernmost corner of the grounds, locate a moringa tree there, bring down a corpse (Badal) hanging from a tree branch, and bring it to the mendicant. The mendicant wanted to sit on Bedal

and perform certain rites.

En route, Batal would tell a story, and at the end, pose a question to the king. If the king knew the answer, he should answer, or else Vedāla (Badal) would break the king's head. If the king spoke and broke the silence, Batal would fly back to the tree. This happened 25 times (thus 25 stories). The king was supposed to deliver Batal to the mendicant according to the agreement.

Batal revealed to the king that the mendicant intended to kill him in order to gain all the power in the world. The king went to the mendicant, who tried to kill the king but ended up being killed by the king instead.

2023-1 Who Is The Sinner?

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Vjramukut the prince and his friend, the son of the minister, were good friends. They went to a forest and saw a beautiful girl along with her friends taking a bath in a jungle pond. The eyes of the prince and the girl met, and they immediately fell in love with each other. She gave an ambiguous signal to the prince and went back to her kingdom.

The prince and his friend deciphered the signal that the princess came from Karnataka. The friends went to Karnataka and soon found out that the king would not agree to his daughter's wedding to the prince. The prince and his friend cooked up a scheme which blamed the princess of palace robbery. Upset by his daughter's act, the king

exiled his daughter out of the kingdom. The prince met the princess, married her and took her to Banaras, where they lived happily.

Now, Betal queried - "who is the sinner in this case, Vikram?"

Vikram responded - "The King of Karnataka. The prince did everything to take the princess as his wedded wife. But the King didn't even trust his own daughter and fell victim to the machination of the prince and his friend."

Hearing the correct answer, Betal went back to the tree trunk.

2023-2 Who Is The Husband

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Once upon a time, in a village near the banks of the river Yamuna, there resided a man named Keshav. Keshav had been in search of a suitable groom for his daughter, Madhumati. As fate would have it, Keshav's wife, son, and daughter each found three different prospective grooms based on their individual preferences. However, before a final decision could be made, tragedy struck when Madhumati was bitten by a venomous snake, leading to her untimely demise.

In the aftermath of the incident, the first suitor took possession of Madhumati's belongings and returned to his own home, cherishing them as mementos. The second young man chose to reside in the very place where Madhumati had tragically

lost her life, as if keeping her memory alive within those surroundings. Meanwhile, the third young man departed from the village, seeking to acquire the mystical knowledge required to resurrect the dead.

Having successfully acquired the newfound mystical art, the third young man employed his newfound abilities to bring Madhumati back to life. As Madhumati was restored to the realm of the living, the pressing question emerged - to whom should she be married?

Betal posed the question to Vikram, "Can you tell me, Vikram, who is the rightful husband of Madhumati?"

Vikram contemplated the situation before responding, "The boy who took Madhumati's belongings as cherished mementos can be considered as her son. The boy who used his mystical powers to bring Madhumati back to life can be seen as her father. And the boy who chose to reside at the very site where Madhumati's life was tragically lost, as if she were still alive, is the rightful husband of Madhumati."

Upon hearing the correct answer, Betal swiftly retreated back to his abode within the tree trunk.

Moral: Reasoning and careful consideration lead to effective problem-solving and decision-making.

Once upon a time, there was a king named Roopsen who ruled over the kingdom of Burdwān. One day, a young man named Birbar approached the king seeking employment. Impressed by Birbar, King Roopsen appointed him as his personal guard and rewarded him generously.

A few days later, the king heard a woman crying inconsolably in a nearby field. Concerned, King Roopsen instructed Birbar to investigate the matter. Unbeknownst to Birbar, the king himself secretly followed him. Birbar soon discovered that the weeping woman was an omen foretelling an imminent threat to the king's life. When Birbar sought a remedy to avert this danger, the lady informed him about a temple nearby. She revealed that if Birbar renounced everything and dedicated himself to serving the temple, the king's life would be spared.

Upon hearing this, Birbar made the decision to leave his home and devote himself, along with his family, to serving the temple. However, life in the temple proved to be exceedingly difficult, and Birbar and his family could not withstand the harsh conditions. They eventually succumbed to their circumstances and passed away. When King Roopsen learned of this tragic outcome, he was filled with despair and contemplated taking his own life.

In that moment of grief and hopelessness, the goddess of the temple appeared before the king. Recognizing the purity of his heart, she bestowed

her blessings upon him. Touched by the king's plight, the goddess granted his request to resurrect Birbar and his family. Miraculously, the family was restored to life.

Now, Betal, the ghost accompanying King Vikram, posed a question, asking, "Birbar sacrificed himself and his family, and the king was also willing to sacrifice himself. If you had to choose, whose sacrifice is greater?"

Vikram contemplated for a moment before responding, "In my opinion, the king's sacrifice is greater. Birbar was obligated to protect the king as his personal guard, but the king was not obligated to protect Birbar. Yet, driven by his affection and compassion, the king willingly chose to sacrifice his own life."

Upon hearing the correct answer, Betal swiftly retreated to his abode within the tree trunk.

Moral: A true king stands by his subjects and is willing to make sacrifices for their well-being, even when not obligated to do so.

2023-4WhoShouldBeTheGroom
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Once upon a time, in the city of Ujjain, there resided a man named Haridas. Haridas was on a quest to find a suitable husband for his daughter, Mahadevi. She had expressed her desire to marry a brave and fearless man. One fateful day, Haridas encountered a young man skilled in crafting

chariots that could traverse great distances in a blink of an eye. Thinking he had found the perfect groom for his daughter, Haridas was filled with hope. However, upon returning home, he discovered that his wife and son had also selected two potential suitors for Mahadevi.

As the family deliberated over the matter, tragedy struck when Mahadevi was abducted by a malevolent demon. Fortunately, the young man chosen by Haridas's son possessed a hidden power that allowed him to locate Mahadevi's whereabouts. Utilizing his secret ability, he swiftly informed the boy favored by Haridas, who wasted no time employing his magical chariot to reach the captive's location. Meanwhile, the suitor chosen by Mahadevi's mother valiantly battled the demon, eventually defeating it and liberating Mahadevi from her imprisonment.

"Can you inform Vikram who would be the most suitable groom for Mahadevi?" inquired Betal.

Vikram pondered for a moment before responding, "Mahadevi desired a courageous young man. Hence, the individual who fought for her and secured her freedom is undoubtedly the most fitting husband for her."

Upon hearing the correct answer, Betal swiftly retreated to his place within the tree trunk.

Once upon a time, there resided a King in the prosperous city of Dharmpur. The King, filled with devotion, had constructed a magnificent temple in the heart of the city. In the days that followed, a young man arrived in Dharmpur and was immediately captivated by the splendor of the temple. As he ascended the temple stairs, his eyes met those of a beautiful young girl, the daughter of a washerman. Love blossomed within his heart, and he earnestly prayed to the temple's presiding Goddess, seeking her blessing to unite him with the girl. Mirroring his affection, the girl also held an affection for the young man, and their hearts intertwined, leading them to come together in marriage.

Time passed, and the same young man, accompanied by his wife and a close friend, returned to Dharmpur. Eager to pay homage to the temple once more, he left his wife and friend beneath the shade of a tree and proceeded towards the sacred grounds. Tragically, as fate would have it, the young man stumbled and fell from the temple stairs, losing his life in the process. A few hours later, his friend went in search of him. Upon discovering the lifeless body of his beloved companion, he was overcome with grief and chose to end his own life as well. When the wife received news of her husband's demise and the death of his dear friend, her sorrow knew no bounds, and she wailed in anguish.

In response to her anguished cries, the temple's

Goddess manifested herself before the distraught wife. Moved by the woman's grief, the Goddess bestowed upon her a sacred syllable, which possessed the power to restore her husband and his friend to life. However, due to a mispronunciation of the sacred syllable, a peculiar occurrence took place. The husband's body became inhabited by the mind of his friend, and vice versa.

"Can you inform Vikram which individual should be recognized as the true husband of the girl?" inquired Betal.

Vikram contemplated the question for a moment before answering, "The body that houses the mind of the girl's husband should be acknowledged as her true husband, as our identity lies within our consciousness."

Upon hearing the correct response, Betal swiftly retreated back to his abode within the tree trunk.

Moral: Our true essence resides within our consciousness.

2023-6WhoseFavorIsGreater myindiastories.com

Once upon a time, in the land of Mithilavati, resided a young boy named Chiramdev. His heart's desire was to serve in the royal court, but he had yet to find an opportunity to enter its esteemed halls. One fateful day, the King of Mithilavati, Gunadhip, ventured into the jungle for a hunting expedition and became lost. Serendipitously, Chiramdev stumbled upon the lost King and saved his life.

Deeply grateful for the young boy's heroism, the King appointed Chiramdev as his personal guard. A few days later, Chiramdev found himself by the seashore and his gaze fell upon a majestic temple. Intrigued, he decided to pay the sacred place a visit. As he ascended the temple stairs, his eyes met those of a beautiful girl. Instantly, Chiramdev fell in love with her. The girl instructed Chiramdev to take a holy dip in the temple pond. Miraculously, as soon as he immersed himself in the waters, he found himself transported back to Mithilavati. Chiramdev recounted the extraordinary tale to the King, who, moved by his loyal guard's plight, agreed to assist him. Together, they journeyed to the temple near the seashore. There, they encountered the same girl once again. However, this time, it was the King who captured her heart. Despite her affection for the King, he selflessly urged the girl to marry Chiramdev instead.

"Can you tell Vikram, whose favor carries greater weight, Gunadhip's or Chiramdev's?" Betal inquired.

Vikram pondered the question before responding, "Gunadhip's favor holds greater significance, as he was under no obligation to sacrifice his own happiness for Chiramdev, yet he did so out of pure affection."

Upon hearing the correct answer, Betal swiftly retreated back to his dwelling within the tree trunk.

Moral: A person should always honor their

commitments.

2023-7WhoseSacrificeIsGreater
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Once upon a time, there resided a noble Prince named Jimutvahan, who, due to certain family crises, found himself living in exile with his queen, Malayavati. One day, as Jimutvahan was en route to a temple, he encountered a pile of debris. Beside it, a distraught woman wept bitterly. Inquiring about the cause of her sorrow, the lady informed Jimutvahan that a demon plagued their village, devouring the young boys. She revealed that today was her son, Shankchoor's, turn to be taken by the demon. Driven by his compassionate nature, Jimutvahan resolved to confront the demon directly.

When the demon arrived, Jimutvahan fearlessly engaged in a battle of sheer strength. However, the demon swiftly seized Jimutvahan and ascended into the sky. Suddenly, Shankchoor appeared on the scene. Witnessing the imminent danger faced by their beloved King, Shankchoor revealed to the demon that Jimutvahan was not its intended victim; rather, it was Shankchoor himself. Touched by this selfless act, the demon's heart softened. It recognized Jimutvahan's noble character and pledged to spare the lives of the village boys.

"Can you inform Vikram whose penance was greater?" Betal inquired.

Vikram pondered the question before responding,

"Shankchoor's penance holds greater magnitude. Jimutvahan, as a Kshatriya King, had a duty to protect the lives of his subjects. It was an obligation bestowed upon him. However, Shankchoor's actions were driven purely by his compassion for his fellow beings. He saved Jimutvahan's life based solely on humanitarian grounds, making his penance more significant."

Upon hearing the correct answer, Betal swiftly retreated to his abode within the tree trunk.

Moral: Humanity is the most sacred religion.

2023-8WhoIsMostEducated myindiastories.com

Once upon a time, in a village, there resided four siblings. One day, they made the decision to seek out a knowledgeable master and learn the art of resurrection from him. After completing their training, they began their journey back to their village. Along the way, they stumbled upon the lifeless body of a lion. Eager to showcase their newly acquired skills, the siblings decided to put their learning to the test. However, the fourth and youngest brother held a different perspective.

The eldest brother took charge and arranged the lion's bones meticulously. The second brother skillfully covered the bones with the lion's skin. Just as the third brother was about to perform the resurrection, the youngest brother raised his voice in disagreement. Regrettably, his pleas went unheard, and he found himself climbing a nearby tree in a bid to distance himself from the unfolding

events. Ignoring the fourth brother's warnings, the third brother proceeded to recite a sacred chant, intending to bring the lion back to life. In a sudden turn of events, the lion was indeed resurrected, only to devour all three brothers.

"So, Vikram, can you tell me who among the siblings possessed the greatest wisdom?" Betal inquired.

Vikram contemplated the question before responding, "The one who attempted to dissuade his brothers from their course of action. He possessed the wisdom and common sense to foresee the dire consequences that awaited them. In contrast, the other three brothers lacked the discernment to envision the potential outcomes of their actions."

Upon hearing the correct answer, Betal swiftly retreated back to his dwelling within the tree trunk.

Enjoy Vikram and Betal Stories and explore the world of Panchatantra Stories!

2023-9TheThiefsLaughAndCry myindiastories.com

Once upon a time, in the kingdom of Chandrahridaya, there ruled a King named Randhir. The land was plagued by a sudden surge in robberies, despite the King's relentless efforts to suppress the menace. Determined to put an end to the thievery, King Randhir resolved to personally capture the thief. Disguising himself as a common man, he patrolled the town vigilantly. His

perseverance bore fruit when he apprehended not just a single thief, but an entire gang responsible for the robberies.

As the captured thief was paraded through the town, the daughter of a trader caught sight of him and fell deeply in love. The trader's daughter pleaded with her father to spare the thief's life, moved by her affection for him. However, King Randhir remained resolute in his decision to punish the criminals, and he did not agree to spare the thief. The following day, the thief was taken for execution. Upon learning about the trader's daughter and her love for him, the thief's emotions took a sudden turn. First, he burst into laughter, and then tears streamed down his face.

"Can you tell Vikram why the thief laughed and then cried?" Betal inquired.

Vikram pondered the question before responding, "The thief initially laughed out of pity, realizing that such a kind-hearted girl had fallen in love with someone with a criminal past like his own. However, his subsequent tears stemmed from the regret that if such a wonderful girl had entered his life earlier, he would never have embarked on the path that led him to his impending execution."

Upon hearing the correct answer, Betal swiftly retreated to his abode within the tree trunk.

Moral: Love has the power to transform and redeem even the most troubled hearts.

Once upon a time, in the village of Dharmpur, there lived a Brahmin named Govind. Govind had two sons named Hatidatt and Somdatt. One day, Govind found himself in need of a tortoise for a ritual intended to bring forth wealth and prosperity. As soon as Hatidatt and Somdatt became aware of their father's requirement, they began quarreling over who would have the privilege of bringing the tortoise. The dispute escalated, eventually reaching the royal court, where the King decided to assess the talents of the two brothers before making a final decision.

Hatidatt, the elder son, claimed that he possessed a unique ability to smell food and accurately identify its place of origin. Intrigued by this claim, the King summoned his chef and instructed him to bring a sample of food from the palace kitchen. Hatidatt took a deep sniff of the dish and confidently declared that the grains used in the preparation of the food had been cultivated in a field located near the royal palace. To everyone's amazement, the chef confirmed the accuracy of Hatidatt's claim. The King was impressed by his extraordinary talent.

Curious to see the abilities of the younger son, Somdatt, the King then turned his attention to him. Somdatt confidently asserted that he possessed a unique skill to inspect a bed and discern whether it was suitable for sleeping. Eager to test this claim,

the King ordered his servant to bring a bed for examination. Somdatt carefully examined the bed, layer by layer, and then declared that the seventh layer harbored a hidden thorn, rendering the bed unsuitable for a comfortable sleep. Once again, the accuracy of Somdatt's observation astonished everyone present. The King was captivated by his remarkable talent.

Faced with the dilemma of determining which son was more intelligent, the King found himself at a loss.

"Can you enlighten me, Vikram, as to which of the two brothers is truly the more intelligent?" Betal inquired.

Vikram, filled with honesty, admitted that he did not possess the answer at that moment. Intrigued by Vikram's integrity, Betal graciously agreed to continue their journey together, seeking further wisdom and enlightenment.

Moral: Sometimes, determining intelligence and talent is not a straightforward task, and it requires deeper insights and exploration.

2023-11AbsolutionOfSins myindiastories.com

Dhivakar lived in Mahadhanapuram with his daughter Kala and wife Prabha. Although he tried to marry her off numerous times, various impediments came in his way. His wife Prabha sought the help of her brother, Gopi.

Gopi took the horoscope to Kausikan, a close friend

of his who was famous for his expertise. When he examined Kala's horoscope, he concluded that her horoscope was similar to that of Sita Devi, the consort of Lord Rama. This meant that the marriage would face many difficulties.

Kausikan offered a solution, suggesting that they take his sister Prabha, Dhivakar, and Kala to Ramar Koil (temple) in Jaipuri. Kala should offer the temple Prasadam to a virtuous man in the town, and this act would result in Kala's wedding.

The family took Gopi, the maternal uncle of Kala, to Jaipuri, the temple town, as the uncle would help them locate a virtuous person.

At the temple, Kala took the prasadam (sacrament/temple food), and they all went street by street in search of a virtuous man. Kausikan stopped the vehicle in front of a house and asked Kala, the prospective bride, to go into the house and serve the sacrament to the man of the house.

As Kala entered the house, a handsome youth emerged and looked at her intently, taken aback by her beauty. Kala announced that she was there to serve the sacrament to the man of the house. The youth brought his parents out, impressed by her beauty, and invited Dhivakar's family into the house. Kausikan examined the horoscope of the handsome youth and declared it a perfect match. The wedding date was set.

The boy's name was Virabhadra, his father's name was Sivaraman, and his mother's name was

Kamini. The next day, as they were on their way home and night fell, they stayed in a traveler's inn. The following morning, Kausikan, the maternal uncle, went to a nearby river to bathe. A Rakshasa jumped out of a tree, accosted him, and declared that he would kill him unless he answered his question.

Kausikan, being a knowledgeable and well-rounded person, was not afraid of the Rakshasa and addressed him, saying, "O Rakshasa! You are under the spell of a curse. What you need is relief from this curse. I can show you the way to freedom. Do not waste time asking me questions."

The Rakshasa anxiously and expectantly asked Kausikan to tell him how to become human again and be freed from his predicament.

Kausikan replied, "You possess a rare power that you should use for a beneficial purpose. By placing a fruit on the palm of your hand and reciting a mantra, the fruit becomes empowered and blesses a woman with a baby when she eats it."

The Rakshasa said, "I don't know how to distinguish a virtuous woman from a sinful woman. You must show me one."

Kausikan pondered the offer for a while and said, "Your time will come. Wait for a few years."

Later, the family returned home. A few days later, Kala and Virabhadra's wedding took place. Kala went to her husband's place and led a happy life.

One year passed, but Kala did not bear a child. The in-laws blamed her for not having borne a child, and her husband did not come to her rescue.

Three years went by without a child for Kala. Ramanathan, a friend of the family, offered his daughter in marriage to Virabhadra as his second wife.

Ramanathan encouraged a horoscopist to go to Sivaraman, obtain Kala's horoscope, pretend to study it, and falsely declare that Kala would never have a child. If Virabhadra married his daughter, a child would be born. Ramanathan promised to reward the horoscopist with plenty of money if he could convince Virabhadra.

Sitaraman went to Virabhadra and, as coached, announced that the family had decided to marry Subhadra as Virabhadra's second wife.

Upon hearing the bad news, Kala's parents approached the polymath Kausikan. Kausikan assured them, saying, "Certainly, Kala will have a child. The delay is caused by your sins. The time is ripe for the auspicious birth of a baby for Kala."

Sivaraman informed Kausikan about Sitaraman's disruptive forecast. Kausikan invited Sitaraman and proposed a contest between them, saying, "I claim that my horoscope predictions will come true. If my forecast fails, I admit defeat. However, if Kala becomes pregnant, I will make you ride a donkey around town wearing a garland of footwear. Do you agree?" Nervous and lying, Sitaraman ran out of

town.

Immediately, Kausikan met with the Rakshasa and said, "An auspicious time favors you now. Give me that powerful fruit." The Rakshasa gave Kausikan the Mantra-infused fruit. As a result, the Rakshasa fell down dead. Kausikan took the fruit and made Kala eat it. Two months later, she was two months pregnant, and she eventually gave birth to a male child.

The Vedalam interrupted Vikraman from continuing the story.

Vedalam said, "O king! Kausikan could have given the fruit soon after the wedding, and not three years later."

Vikraman replied, "The horoscope predicted that Kala would become pregnant only three years after marriage. Kausikan, being human, could not intervene with fate and the three-year delay. Kala's horoscope stated that the first three years after marriage would be full of hardship. Kausikan waited until the auspicious time arrived before giving her the powerful fruit."

Since Vikraman's correct reply broke the silence, Vedalam returned to the moringa tree.

2023-12UnbelievableTruth myindiastories.com

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The king wanted to meet the mendicant, who proposed to meet him under a banyan tree in the center of the cremation ground on the outskirts of the city on the 14th day of the dark half of the month. The king met him under the tree. The mendicant asked the king to go to the northernmost corner of the grounds, locate a moringa tree there, bring down a corpse (Badal) hanging from a tree branch, and bring it to the mendicant. The mendicant wanted to sit on Bedal and perform certain rites.

En route, Batal would tell a story, and at the end, pose a question to the king. If the king knew the answer, he should answer, or else Vedāla (Badal) would break the king's head. If the king spoke and broke the silence, Batal would fly back to the tree. This happened 25 times (thus 25 stories). The king

was supposed to deliver Batal to the mendicant according to the agreement.

Batal revealed to the king that the mendicant intended to kill him to gain all the power in the world. The king went to the mendicant, who tried to kill the king but ended up being killed by the king instead.

Undaunted in his efforts, King Vikraman brought down the Vedalam and carried it to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam spoke, "King! It appears that your extraordinary efforts are not for any ordinary purpose. For some greater objective, you seem to do it. Some expend their energy for inconsequential reasons. Hear me tell a story on wasted efforts by King Ravivarman."

Ravivarman was the king of the Vidarbha kingdom, always fascinated with wondrous matters. He ceded the responsibility of rulership to his ministers and directed his attention and time to new happenings. Occasionally, he assembled his ministers and enquired about the affairs of the kingdom. He was satisfied with the pronouncements of the ministers when they said that the situation was running smoothly, and the subjects were happy.

Once he listened to a story from the Mahabharata about Mayan's wondrous palatial house.

Ravivarman called his first minister to convene an assembly on the full moon day and award prizes to subjects who narrated extraordinary events.

On the appointed day, the king took his seat on the throne. The first narrator was a farmer who showed a box that he had found a few years ago while ploughing his field. He found a rock upon opening the box. Opening the box resulted in the bright sunny day turning into a dark day, and closing the box resulted in the dark day becoming a sunny bright day. The farmer gave the box to the king. King Ravivarman opened the box, and the day turned into night. When the king closed the box, the night disappeared. The king congratulated and praised Gopi, the farmer, and gifted him 1000 gold coins.

The next person was Ratnakaran, the businessman. He paid homage to the king and said, "I saw a wonderful sight in the night sky when I took a walk in my garden. A winged horse was carrying the celestial Gandharva couple on its back. A flower fell off the woman's head. The flower filled the whole garden with its fragrance. I took it to the prayer room and left it there. The astonishing thing about the flower is that it never faded since its fall to the ground." So saying, he gave the ivory box to the king. Ravivarman opened the box, and the fragrance filled the assembly hall. The king declared, "It is the Gandharva flower. This is an unbelievable truth." So saying, the king gave Ratnakar a pearl necklace.

The next person was Gopal Sharma, a pundit. He said to the king, "I have an exceptional coin with me. Upon touching it, old memories come into the fore." He gave the coin to the king, who, upon touching the coin, experienced past events that came into his current memory. The king gave Pundit Sharma a gold necklace.

Soon, a majestic-looking youth came before the king and announced, "Dear king, I arrived at the assembly hall through the main entrance. Do you know by which entrance I came in here?"

Ravivarman enquired, "By what entrance did you come in?" The young man declared, "I came here through the Bribery Entrance."

The shocked king exclaimed, "The Bribery Entrance?"

The youth replied, "Every recipient of your prizes bribed the guards ten gold coins at the main entrance before they entered the Darbar. I too gave the bribe before permission to enter was given. That being so, what is wrong in calling the main entrance a Bribery Entrance?"

The king jumped out of his throne and roared, "What? The guards are on the take. I can't believe it."

The youth responded, "Maharajah, you said you can't believe it. Yes, it is an unbelievable truth. All the delegated officers of the kingdom loot the treasury and the tax collections. You don't know any of this. I came here to expose this unbelievable

truth and do not have an intent to receive a gift from you."

After the youth's roar subsided, it took a few minutes for the king to recover from the shock. The ministers and the officers were crestfallen. The king descended from the throne, approached Sivadass, the youth, applied his own diamond necklace to the youth's neck, and said, "What you said now was the most unbelievable truth thus far revealed." The king added, "I am appointing you as my primary consultant."

Soon after that moment, Vedalam interrupted the story being told by King Vikraman. Vedalam said, "O king! What do you think of the act of King Ravivarman? He announced to reward all those who demonstrated wondrous things with proof. Gopi's rock, Ratnakar's Gandharva flower, and Sharma's coin are all unbelievable and wondrous objects. But what is the unbelievable and wondrous element in Sivadass's statement of truth, while the king rewarded him with the diamond necklace and appointed him as his primary consultant? If you know the answer to my question but remain silent, your head will explode into 100 pieces."

Vikraman said, "There is no doubt that what the first three showed was unbelievable and wondrous. But the truth revealed by Sivadass opened the eyes of the king, who was completely ignorant of what was happening in his kingdom. The revelation of Sivadass benefited the country and the people, which was not the case with the first three

claimers. Sivadass was courageous to come forward to reveal the unbelievable truth. King Ravivarman regarded the youth's revelation as the greatest truth revealed in the assembly, and the king suitably rewarded him with a high position and prize.

Because of Vikraman's right answer and the end of silence, the burdensome Vedalam left Vikraman's shoulder and flew back to the murunga tree.

2023-13GunasekarsStory myindiastories.com

Vikram (Vikraman) was the king. Betāl was the Vedalam, the ghost and the storyteller. King Vikram must give the correct answer. If not, the king's head would explode into 100 pieces. If he gave the correct answer, the ghost would fly off his shoulder to its refuge, the moringa tree, thereby frustrating Vikram to take Batal to its destination, where a mendicant was waiting for Betal delivered as promised by the king.

Vedalam is the analogue of west's Vampire. (Betall-Badal-Bedāl-Betal-Vedālam-Vedalam = the ghost)

Here is a detailed story.

King Vikram held court and received gifts from the visitors. A mendicant gave him a fruit on every visit, which the king handed over to the royal storekeeper. One day, the fruit broke while being handled and a ruby came out. The king ordered all the fruits to be examined. All the stored fruits yielded rubies.

The king wanted to meet the mendicant, who proposed to meet him under a banyan tree in the center of the cremation ground on the outskirts of the city on the 14th day of the dark half of the month. The king met him under the tree. The mendicant asked the king to go to the northernmost corner of the grounds, locate a moringa tree there, bring down a talking corpse (Badal) hanging from a tree branch, and take it to the mendicant. The mendicant wanted to sit on Bedal, the ghost and perform certain rites, the idea being to kill the king and become the master of the world.

En route, Batal would tell a story, and at the end, pose a question to the king. If the king knew the answer, he should answer, or else Vedalam (Badal or the ghost) would break the king's head. If the king spoke, broke the silence, and answered the question correctly, Badal would fly back to the tree. This happened 25 times (thus 25 stories). The king was supposed to deliver Batal to the mendicant according to the agreement.

Badal helps the king.

Badal revealed to the king that the mendicant intended to kill him to gain all the power in the world. The king went to the mendicant, who tried to kill the king but ended up being killed by the king instead. Undaunted in his efforts, King Vikram brought down the Vedalam and carried it to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam said, "O king! People of your stature, dedicated to life's goals, will try in a

dedicated manner until they achieve their goals."

"There are some people with no attachment of any kind, who wander like a Jñāni and suddenly change course to attain their goals that take years of pursuit for others. Hear the story of Gunasekar, who was of that nature."

A minor king named Chandravarman ruled Virāha Nādu and had twins. The older and the younger were named Kulasekar and Gunasekar. Since childhood, Kulasekar had the idea to become the king and accordingly moved among people with equal status. Gunasekar, completely devoid of likes and dislikes, had not thought of high and low among people and had no desire to become the ruler of the country.

Chandravarman celebrated their birthday extravagantly. On their tenth birthday, they received a statue of Garuda, the mount of Lord Vishnu, sent by Kulaguru (Family teacher) Sambunāthar. The bird was large and had a key by the ear, turning which made it fly and return after the flight. Only one person could sit on the big bird. The princes took the bird to the royal gardens. Kulasekar took the first flight, returned after enjoying the flight, and gave the bird to Gunasekar to fly on. Sārathi, the son of the palace maid, wanted to ride the bird. His mother reminded him that his desire was inappropriate for him. Gunasekar observed the talk between the mother and the son and told the palace worker, "Your son Sārathy is of my age. His desire is appropriate for

his age. Therefore, I give him the opportunity to ride the bird." Gunasekar asked Sārathy to climb on the bird. Kulasekar rushed and stopped Sārathy from taking flight on the bird.

All the people approved Kulasekar's disapproval of Sārathy taking a flight. Gunasekar was upset and unhappy. Gunasekar declared, "If Sārathy cannot ride the bird, I won't ride the bird. I will become the pupil of Kulaguru, make a flying bird, and allow Sārathy to sit on it for a flight."

King Chandavarman had the same thought and admitted both his sons to the Gurukulam (School) to learn royal ethics, justice, finance, economics, and other subjects. From day one, Kulasekar showed interest in politics and economics. In due course of time, Gunasekar built a bird and let Sārathy take a ride. Witnessing the equal treatment of the worker's son by Prince Gunasekar, the Kulaguru observed, "You are no ordinary person. You are a Mahān (great person)."

After completing their studies under the tutelage of Gurukula Sambhunathar, the princes returned home to the palace. Discovering the disparate inclinations of the two sons, Chandavarman said to Sambhunathar, "Kulasekaran learned political science very well from you. It appears Gunasekaran did not learn political science." Sambhunathar observed, "Gunasekaran did not have an interest in ruling the country. That is why he did not care to learn political science."

The king proposed to split the nation into two and make each one the ruler of half of the kingdom. However, the king's parents and the council of ministers opposed the idea. The king intended to invade a foreign country and make Gunasekar the ruler of the conquered territory.

Then, the Visāla kingdom announced the Swayamvara of Princess Chandrakala. Princes from many countries were invited to participate. Chandravarman thought of sending Gunasekar in place of Kulasekar for the Swayamvara. The king's vain hope was that Gunasekar would become the king if he married Chandrakala. The king expressed his idea to Gunasekar. When Gunasekar found out about Kulasekar's desire to marry Chandrakala, Gunasekar gave up the idea of going to the Swayamvara. Kulasekar went in his place.

Many princes assembled to participate in the Swayamvara. Chandrakala entered the Swayamvara Mandapam with a garland in her hands. Someone entered the hall, grabbed Chandrakala's hand, and declared, "My name is Mitrapinthan. I love Chandrakala. I am the rightful would-be groom. I am taking her to my kingdom. If you have the courage, defeat me in battle and take Chandrakala." Saying thus, he mounted a waiting horse with his prized bride-to-be and ran off.

Viragupta, the kingly father of Chandrakala, announced that he would give his daughter in marriage and his kingdom to any prince who rescued his daughter from the cruel abductor.

Immediately, many princes and kings invaded Mahāparvatha to rescue Chandrakala. None of them succeeded because Mahāparvatha was a hill country hard to invade, subdue, and vanquish. They all died fighting. Kulasekaran was one among the dead.

Upon learning of his brother's death, Gunasekar decided to invade the hill country. He began to gather intelligence about Mitrapinthan and his country.

Mitrapinthan, from early childhood, prayed to Rūdrabhairavi Amman in her temple and received special powers from the goddess. The story was that the goddess appeared in his dream, expressing a desire to drink the blood of 100 princes sacrificed by Mitrapinthan for her and bless him with extraordinary power. The only way Mitrapinthan could be killed was by an assault with Rūdrabhairavi's own spear.

After hearing this intelligence, Gunasekaran carried out many preliminary acts conducive to Mitrapinthan's death, assumed a disguise, and went to Mahāparvatham. One midnight, Gunasekar in disguise followed Mitrapinthan and Chandrakala on their way to the Rudrabhairavi Temple. As Mitrapinthan entered the sanctum, Gunasekaran hastened to the sanctum sanctorum, grabbed the deity's spear, plunged it into Mitrapinthan's chest, and killed him. Amman appeared before him and said, "With the sacrifice of 99 princes by Mitrapinthan, the 100th sacrifice of Mitrapinthan

was your offer to me. I want to offer my boons to you. Ask me what you want." Gunasekara said, "Please resurrect all 99 princes except the 100th sacrifice, Mitrapinthan." Amman granted the boon as requested.

Amman told the 99 resurrected princes to accept Gunasekar as their monarch since he was responsible for their resurrection. Saying thus, Amman disappeared.

The Vedalam stopped telling the story at this juncture and said to Vikraman, "Don't you think that Gunasekar's action was surprising? He expressed a desire not to become the ruler of the country. See how he changed. Amman stated that an ordinary man could not kill Mitrapinthan.

Gunasekar's action was surprising. He expressed a desire not to become the ruler of the country, but circumstances led him down a different path.

Amman stated that an ordinary man could not kill Mitrapinthan. How was it that Gunasekar was able to accomplish this feat? If you kept silent knowing the answer, your head would shatter into a hundred pieces."

Vikraman responded, "Gunasekaran did not kill Mitrapinthan out of a desire to become king. He killed him as an act of revenge for the murder of his brother and the senseless killings of the 99 princes. His intelligence revealed that an ordinary man could not kill Mitrapinthan because of the protection bestowed upon him by Rudra Bhairavi.

Gunasekar was not an ordinary person but an upright individual with virtuous qualities. It is no surprise that an extraordinary person like Gunasekar was able to slay Mitrapinthan."

Impressed by Vikraman's correct answer and his breaking of the silence, the Vedalam flew off his shoulders and returned to the tree. Vikraman continued his journey, determined to claim his rightful place as the true king. And with the lessons learned from the stories shared by the Vedalam, he became a wise and just ruler, leading his kingdom to prosperity and happiness.

From that day forward, King Vikram was known for his bravery, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to justice. The tales of his valor and righteousness spread far and wide, and his reign was remembered as a golden era in the history of the kingdom.

And so, the story of Gunasekar and Vikraman serves as a reminder that one's path in life can often take unexpected turns, and that it is our actions and virtues that truly define us.

2023-14Selfishness myindiastories.com

Background story.

Vikram was the king, obligated to take the ghost to the mendicant. Betāl was Vedālam, the ghost riding on the back of the king, the storyteller and the savior of king Vikram who carried the ghost to a mendicant. The Vedalam told a story to the king.

King Vikram must give the correct answer. If not, the king's head would explode into 100 pieces. If he gave the correct answer, the ghost will fly off his shoulder to its refuge in the moringa tree, thereby frustrating Vikram to take Batal to its destination, where a mendicant was waiting for delivery of Betal delivered to him as promised by the king. The mendicant would sit on the Vedalam, perform certain rites and rituals, and thereby gain all the power in the world.

Vedalam is the analogue of west's Vampire. (Betall-Badal-Bedal-Betal-Vedalam-Vetālam = the ghost)

Here is a detailed story.

King Vikram held court and received gifts from the visitors. A mendicant gave him a fruit on every visit, which the king handed over to the royal storekeeper. One day, the fruit broke while being handled, and a ruby came out. The king ordered all the fruits to be examined. All the stored fruits yielded rubies.

The king wanted to meet the mendicant, who proposed to meet him under a banyan tree in the center of the cremation ground on the outskirts of the city on the 14th day of the dark half of the month (waning moon). The king met him under the tree. The mendicant asked the king to go to the northernmost corner of the grounds, locate a moringa tree there, bring down a talking corpse (Badal) hanging from a tree branch, and take it to the mendicant. The mendicant wanted to sit on

Bedal and perform certain rites, the idea being to kill the king and become the master of the world.

En route, Batal would tell a story, and at the end, pose a question to the king. If the king knew the answer, he should answer, or else Vedalam (Badal) would break the king's head. If the king spoke, broke the silence, and answered the question correctly, Batal would fly back to the tree. This happened 25 times (thus 25 stories). The king was supposed to deliver Batal to the mendicant according to the agreement.

Batal revealed to the king that the mendicant intended to kill him to gain all the power in the world. The king went to the mendicant, who tried to kill the king but ended up being killed by the king instead.

Undeterred in his repeated attempts to retrieve the hanging Vedalam from the tree, the man climbed up, brought it down to the ground, descended from the tree, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral ground for delivery to the mendicant. The Vedalam spoke to the king, saying, "I don't understand why you loiter in the frightening cremation grounds."

Vedalam: "It seems to me that you exert so much effort to attain magnificent powers. Let me tell you the story of Kabali." Padmanabhan, a popular merchant in Manikkapuri, wanted to marry off his daughter, Pratyushaw, to Anandan, the son of his friend. A few days before the wedding day,

Pratyushaw suffered an unusual malady—she lost her speech. Padmanabhan, the father of the prospective bride, fretted and fumed in frustration. Many physicians brought in from various towns administered treatments to no avail. One day, Dr. Dhananjayan examined her and said to Padmanabhan that his daughter's laryngeal nerves were paralyzed.

The doctor said, "Laryngeal paralysis is the reason for her inability to speak. Dasamulam, a concoction of ten medicinal roots, will help cure her paralysis. Dasamulam is available only on Snake Island in the Bay of Bengal, which is difficult to access."

Upon hearing the doctor's words, the emotionally charged father of the bride said, "Doctor, for Pratyushaw, I will bring Dasamulam from any corner of the world, even if it means losing my life in the effort."

Dr. Dhananjayan looked proudly at the merchant and said, "If you bring the herb with whatever effort you can muster, it will not only cure Pratyushaw but also benefit many others with the same illness. You don't have to go alone. Please take my disciple with you."

Anand's friend, Sivanathan, came forward to accompany him. Kabali, one among the gathered people, said, "I like derring-do. I'd like to be part of this journey. Let the four of us go."

The foursome began their journey on an auspicious day. They walked for several days, reached the

seashore of the Bay of Bengal, and sailed on a catamaran towards Snake Island. During the first five days of their travel, they faced no danger. On the sixth day, a whale flipped its tail, breaking the catamaran into several pieces. All four of them were drowning in the sea. Sivanathan shoved a broken piece of the boat towards Anandan, who turned to express his gratitude to his friend.

But Sivanathan was nowhere to be found. Anandan saw the other two at a distance, holding onto the remains of the boat and floating in the ocean. Anandan was heartbroken to realize his friend was missing. All three floated, holding onto the pieces of the boat, and reached the shorefront of one of the hills in the ocean. They saw a flying saucer-shaped plate in the sky. They were surprised to see an old man land near them. He said, "Do not fear me. I am a human being like you. For a long time, I had a desire to fly in the sky. Over a period of time, I fashioned this flying plate." Anandan addressed the old man, saying, "Ayya! We were on our way to Snake Island looking for Dasamulam. Do you know where it is?"

The old man said, "This is Snake Island. Vanchinagar is on top of the hill. You must go on this flying plate. If anyone is prepared to sacrifice their youth, they can fly on this flying plate." Immediately, Sanjai came forward to sacrifice his youth and didn't budge despite Anand's objections.

Anand enunciated the mantra given by the old man and turned from youth to old age immediately. The

old man became youthful and immediately handed over the flying plate to Anand.

Ananda and Kabali climbed onto the flying plate and reached Vanchinagar. What they saw in Vanchinagar shocked them. The town's youth, both male and female, had animal heads and human bodies. Only the old men and women had human heads and bodies. They didn't know whom to ask for the herbal medicine. They wandered around the area and reached an old woman's hut.

The old woman said to them, "Dasamulam is in the princess's garden, but the princess is captive to the mantra meister."

Kabali asked the old woman, "Who is this mantra meister? Why do young people have strange physical appearances?" The old woman said, "It is a long story. The mantra meister Mahāthamban was in love with the princess, but she didn't reciprocate his feelings. The mantra meister became angry and cursed all the young men, giving them animal heads. He spared the old people. The mantra meister said he would remove the curse if the princess agreed to marry him." As she narrated the story, the mantra meister passed by the street.

Immediately, Kabali confronted him and said, "I am here to suppress you. With utmost civility, withdraw your curse." The mantra meister replied, "Who the hell are you? I am the mantra meister Mahāthamban! Are you messing with me? See what I can do to you?" Saying this, he raised his mantra

staff. Unexpectedly, Kabali jumped on the mantra meister and took hold of the mantra staff.

As the mantra staff changed hands, the powerless mantra meister ran to escape. Ananda and Kabali caught and tied him down. Soon, the princess came to know of the news and ordered her men to imprison Mahāthamban. She invited Anand and Kabali with royal hospitality and respect to the palace. Upon learning of their intentions, she gave them the herbs they needed from the palace gardens.

Before departing, Kabali, with the use of the mantra staff, performed certain exorcismal acts with the enunciation of mantras.

As they left Vanchinagar, Anand told Kabali, "There is no longer any need for the mantra staff. Throw it away."

But Kabali kept the staff with him. Both returned to the seashore they had left before. Multiple surprises awaited them. Sivanathan was alive and well. Sanjai had regained his youth. The old man with the flying plate had become old once again.

Sivanathan embraced Anand and said, "The ocean waves pushed me away in another direction, separating me from you. With great difficulty, I reached the seashore. Returning the flying plate to the old man, all four of us returned to Manikkapuri.

Thanks to the greatness of the Dasamula herbals, Pratyushaw recovered from her vocal paralysis. On an auspicious day and time, Anand married her.

Kabali attempted to use the mantra staff to make a living, but the mantra staff malfunctioned and beat Kabali so severely that he had to flee town.

The Vedalam stopped telling the story and addressed King Vikraman, saying, "King! Did you see Kabali's fate? The mantra staff not only malfunctioned but also beat up Kabali. Is it true that the mantra sakthi helps and brings about the death of its handler? If you know the answers and remain silent, your head will explode into 100 pieces."

Vikraman replied, "What you said is not right. Sivanathan, Sanjai, and Kabali went to help Anand. Sivanathan saved the life of his drowning friend. Sanjai sacrificed his own youth to fulfill Anand's objective. Kabali, after seizing the mantra staff, used it for selfish reasons to earn money, which resulted in him being beaten by the staff and forced to flee town."

With Vikraman's correct response, his silence ended, and the Vedalam on his shoulders went away, taking refuge in the moringa tree.

2023-15WhoQualifiedAsAnHeir
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Undaunted in his efforts, Vikraman went up the tree again, brought down the hanging body to the ground, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam (ghost) inside the body addressed Vikraman, saying, "There is no

doubt you have intensity and heroism."

Among the Vikraman-Vedalam stories, which one does not have an unexpected answer? What is the reason? Vedalam said, "Let me tell the story of a polymath." Thus, this story began. Prosperity prevailed during the reign of King Sudhatchinar. The only shortcoming was that the king did not have an heir. Worried about the lack of an heir to the throne, the king called his first minister and had consultations with him.

The king asked, "Dear minister, I reign over this country with justice and fairness. A great worry has descended on me because I have no heir. It is good to decide now who will be my heir. I consulted the queen, and she suggested adopting one of her many relatives. I am not inclined to do it. My heir should be a hero with courage and intelligence. How are we to search for one?"

The minister replied, "Prabhu, I have a thought. In our capital city, Gurukula Vidyasagar teaches a host of Kshatriya students archery, swordsmanship, wrestling, administration, war tactics, and much more. If we go to him, we would be able to choose the future king of this kingdom." The king thought it was good advice. The next day, the king and the minister went to the Gurukulam, met Vidyasagar, and stated the purpose of their visit.

Guru Vidyasagar answered, "Maharaja, you have come at the most opportune time. As part of Vijayadasami celebrations, many competitive

events will be taking place. You can witness these events and choose a hero from among them."

Three of the students had just returned in time after a month-long voyage as ordered by Guru Vidyasagar. The king, the minister, and the Guru were present in Gurukula stadium. The Guru invited the three students and asked them to narrate their trip experience. Jayan, the specialist in archery, was the first student. He said, "Dear Guru, I went north and faced no problems on my way. The people appeared to be happy. What shocked me was that some youth were secretly training in weapons at the edge of our country by the forest."

"Ambush, stealing the king's weapons, and stealth weapon manufacturing were the activities of the youth from the nearby kingdom. I killed the leader of the resurgent group from our country and thereby performed my duty to our country."

Vijayan, the second student returning from the expedition, said, "I went south and found it abound in lawlessness because of the lackadaisical attitude of government high officials. Highway robbery was rampant. The youth did not have the courage to fight the robbers. To change the condition, I trained the youth in sword fighting and inculcated courage in them. The youth are now brave."

Gauthaman, the third student, went east and found the country prosperous and peaceful. Therefore, I did not have to employ my warrior skills. One day, I found a gecko in distress, caught between the

fingers of a statue. I saw a wonderful sight. The other geckos brought food to the trapped gecko and fed it. I was amazed to see the fellowship in these one-sense animals. I called the sculptor to break the fingers to release the gecko.

"On my way back, I saw an elephant calf at the bottom of a well. I called the forest dwellers and arranged to rescue the baby elephant from the well. I advised them to emulate the animals like geckos and the elephants who help their kind in need. I stressed to the forest people the fact that jealousy and greed cause people to fight with each other and how ignorant that was."

Immediately, the king and the minister stepped aside and held a discussion between them. They found bravery and courage in Jayan and Vijayan in full measure and decided to choose one of them. They went seeking Guru Vidyasagar's opinion. Vidyasagar addressed the king, "Maharaja! According to my opinion, among the three, Gauthaman was the most suitable candidate to be the regent." The king and the minister were taken aback by the Guru's choice. After a long deliberation, the king said to the Guru, "Gurudeva! I accept your choice." The king went back to the minister.

Vedalam stopped the story at this juncture and addressed King Vikraman, "When the king approached the Guru, thinking the Guru, being highly intelligent, would make the right decision, see, things went wrong. The Guru overlooked the

brave pupils like Jayan and Vijayan and chose a Buddha-like Gauthaman, who spoke of compassion and mercy. How wrong was the Guru? Knowing all these things, the king accepted the Guru's choice and chose to appoint Gauthaman as the regent."

As usual, Vedalam said to Vikraman, "Knowing the answer, your silence will precipitate an explosion of your head into 100 pieces." Vikraman answered, "It is an undeniable truth that the prince should have extraordinary skills and heroism. That is the assessment King Sudhatchinar expected from the Guru. Those qualities were not sufficient for a king. Who is the king? The king is he who strives day and night for the welfare of his subjects. As bravery is necessary to establish peace, so is compassion necessary to protect and defend the people's welfare. The Guru found only bravery in Jayan and Vijayan but noticed bravery and compassion in Gauthaman."

"It is better and wiser to extend a hand of love to people to live in peace and harmony among those who are used to fights and rivalry. Gauthaman's approach is prevention is better than cure. The Guru understood Gauthaman's approach would establish peace and justice. Gauthaman did not come across a situation during his expedition to show his bravery. We can't tell if he has no bravery. He was a good wrestler. When the occasion arises, he will exhibit bravery, and at other times, he will shower love. Those were the reasons the Guru chose him as the regent. After a long reflection, the

king concurred with the Guru."

2023-16TheGenius myindiastories.com

Once, there was a brave and determined king named Vikraman who set out to bring down the Vedalam from a tree. He fearlessly descended from a moringa tree, carrying the Vedalam on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. Curious about Vikraman's purpose, Vedalam questioned him, "Are you wandering through the funeral grounds seeking vengeance on someone? What is your objective? Sometimes, people burdened by emotions take vows, but with time, their anger subsides."

Intrigued, Vedalam began narrating a fascinating tale to King Vikraman. The story was about a youth named Gunaviraman, who lived in a village called Annavaram, surrounded by picturesque mountains. The village farmers were known for cultivating novel agricultural products like root vegetables, fruits, and herbs, which they consumed as their staple diet.

Gunaviraman was a thoughtful and introspective youth from a young age. However, his village people failed to understand him and ridiculed him as a lazy and strange person because his ideas and way of life differed from theirs.

Gunaviraman firmly believed in using the analytical skills bestowed upon humans by God and delving into the vast knowledge present in the world. Unfortunately, his thoughts were alien to the villagers, and they couldn't comprehend his

perspective.

Frustrated by the lack of acceptance, Gunaviraman expressed his disappointment to his father and decided to leave the village. He yearned to go to Dandakaranya forest Gurukulam, an academy where he could expand his knowledge.

Gunaviraman had a strong desire to return to the village one day and command the respect he deserved from those who once mocked him.

As Gunaviraman journeyed towards the academy, he encountered a horse-drawn chariot following him. The driver addressed him affectionately as "Dear brother" and informed Gunaviraman that he was headed to the same destination. The purpose of the chariot's journey was to take Bujangar to the palace because the king's mother was critically ill.

Upon reaching the academy, Gunaviraman humbly approached Bujangar, expressing his eagerness to become his disciple. However, Bujangar suggested that Gunaviraman should first study at the academy run by his old student, Vinayar, for two years before being eligible to join him.

Undeterred by the challenge, Gunaviraman assured Bujangar of his intellectual capabilities and readiness to be examined. Bujangar, obliged to go to the palace, left Gunaviraman with two Granthams, requesting him to attentively study and understand the concepts during his week-long absence.

The other disciples at the academy warned

Gunaviraman that they had struggled for two years to comprehend the Granthams and doubted his ability to do so in a week. Nevertheless, Gunaviraman considered it a challenge and immersed himself in the study of the ancient texts. Remarkably, within four days, he grasped the essence of the treatises.

Excitedly, Gunaviraman shared his knowledge with the other disciples, hoping to gain their respect. However, they ridiculed him, undermining his intellect. Angered by their disrespect, Gunaviraman lashed out, comparing them to the uneducated villagers back home.

Upon Bujangar's return, Gunaviraman astounded him by eloquently explaining the Granthams. Impressed, Bujangar praised Gunaviraman and shared an intriguing incident from the palace.

The king's mother was suffering from an unknown illness, and no one in the palace could cure her. A poet had read poems written by an unknown person to the king, and the symptoms described in the verses matched those of the king's mother.

Bujangar was unable to understand the meaning of the poems and sought a solution. Gunaviraman confidently offered to read and interpret the verses, revealing that the names of the herbs in the poems carried double meanings. He knew precisely how to prepare a decoction using those herbs, which, when administered to the king's mother while enjoying music and dance, would cure her.

Overjoyed by this revelation, Bujangar took Gunaviraman to the palace. They collected the required herbs from Gunaviraman's village, Annavaram, and successfully cured the king's mother. In gratitude, the king rewarded Gunaviraman with gold coins and other valuable treasures.

Gunaviraman's journey from an unappreciated youth to a respected healer and scholar showcased the power of knowledge and the importance of perseverance in the face of challenges.

2023-17GiftToGuru myindiastories.com

Undaunted in his efforts, Vikraman went up the tree again, brought down the hanging body to the ground, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam (ghost) inside the body addressed Vikraman, saying, "It appears that you are trying to find closure to a difficult problem. Sometimes even the most intelligent people turn simple problems into major ones. Let me tell you a story about such a person who happened to be a Guru."

King Surasenar of Avanthipuram had two sons, Vajrasenan and Vikramasenan. As he reached old age, he handed over the rulership to his older son Vajrasenan and left the palace with his wife to become an ascetic (Vānaprastham) in a dense forest. Following his father's tradition, Vajrasenan administered kingly justice, looking after the welfare of his subjects. Prince Manidharan of the

nearby country was his Gurukula classmate from a tender age.

As soon as Vajrasenan took the reins, Manidharan married off his younger sister to Vajrasenan and lived in Avanthipuram. Manidharan, bent on making Avanthipuram his own kingdom, gradually usurped power from Vajrasenan. Vajrasenan, taking time and interest in dance, singing, sculpture, and other fine arts, entrusted the reins over time to Manidharan.

Under the rule of Manidharan, anarchy reigned supreme. The council of ministers, upset over the chaos, attempted to meet with Vajrasenan, but Manidharan stopped them. The council went to Vikramasenan, informed him of the anarchy, and encouraged him to take the reins. However, he refused to follow their advice and admonished them, saying his brother's rule should prevail. With no way out of the anarchy, the council sought out Surasenan who was living in the forest.

Having heard them, Surasenan said, "I have no right to interfere with the administration of the kingdom entrusted to my older son once I left for the forest. Just wait for a little while. There will be a remediation of the problem." Though Surasenan sent them away with no solution, he privately agonized over the prevailing conditions in the country.

Surasenan thought deeply about whether there was a solution to the problem. Since he could not

find a solution, he went to his children's Gurukulam (academy) and met with the seniormost Guru there, beseeching him for a solution to the problem. He said, "Maharaja! I am aware of the prevailing conditions in Avanthipuram. The root cause is Manidharan, the brother-in-law of Vajrasenan. Do not worry about it. I will find an equitable solution." That was the promise made by the senior Guru.

The senior Guru reached Avanthipuram Darbar (court). Miserable Vajrasenan, knowing that his Guru came in search of him, extended an elaborate reception. The Guru told him, "It is customary for the graduating students to give presents to the Guru. But I never took anything from you. I told you that I would take it whenever I needed it. Do you remember it?"

Vajrasenan replied, "I remember it very well. I am prepared to give you whatever you ask for." After he made the promise, the Guru asked him, "Would you break your word?" Vajrasenan said, "Guru, why do you say things like that? Breaking one's word is equal to committing murder. Do not hesitate to ask me."

Guru: "If that is so, please give me your country as Guru Dakshanai (gift)."

Vajrasenan, though shocked, managed to conceal it and said, "I won't break my word. Here is my Rajyam." Even before he could complete his sentence, Manidharan intervened and said, 'Don't

give the country, but give gold and valuables.'

Vajrasenan, thinking it is a crime to break one's word, told the Guru, "Guru Deva! As you desired, I give my Rajyam (kingdom) as a Guru Dakshanai (Dakshina = donation)." He proceeded to remove his crown from his head, put it aside, and got down from his lion-throne.

The guru, looking at Vajrasenan, said, "Vajrasenan! I am at a loss for words to praise you. You could have spent one-tenth of the care to safeguard people's welfare." The Guru sent his disciple to the forest academy to bring Surasena to the palace.

When Surasena arrived at the palace, the Guru told him, "Your older son gave me his rajyam as a donation. I am passing it on to you. You can break the country into two equal parts and give them to your two sons. This will bring peace to the country." Surasena and his two sons accepted the Guru's proposal. Surasena divided the country into two equal parts and installed them as kings.

The Vedalam stopped telling the story and addressed King Vikraman, "Is it not stupidity that Surasena divided the country into two parts and gave one part knowingly to the incompetent son Vajrasenan? Initially, the younger son Vikramasenan said he would not interfere with his brother. It is wrong now he became a king of one of the two divided countries."

"Vikramasenan accepted the rajyam (kingdom). Why is that so? Surasenar, upon becoming an

ascetic, promised he would not interfere with the affairs of the kingdom. In what way was the equal division of the country justified? Knowing the answers to these questions but maintaining silence will result in the explosion of your head into 100 pieces."

King Vikraman said to the Vedalam, "It is customary that the elder son assumes the kingship when the king leaves. Initially, Vikramasenan did not agree to go against tradition. But his father, older brother, and the Guru put pressure on him, so he accepted half the rajyam. Vajrasenan has a good disposition. That is why he accepted his father's dictate. He thought he could be an effective ruler like his younger brother if he told Manidharan to leave the country. Surasenar, a forest ascetic, took the country back from the Guru.

Surasenar accepted the Guru's advice to divide the country into equal parts, considering the welfare of the subjects. There is no question of selfishness. Satisfying the desires of all, King Surasenar and the Guru solved the predicament. Both deserve accolades.

Since Vikraman's correct answer broke his silence, Vedalam flew off to take refuge in the moringa tree.

2023-18NilanjanaAndHerAvatar
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The Tale of Nilanjana: A Celestial Avatar on Earth

Undaunted in his efforts, Vikraman went up the tree again, brought down the hanging body to the ground, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam (ghost) inside the body addressed Vikraman, saying, "King! Some who try hard give up their objective at the last minute and waste all the past effort. I will be telling such a story of wasted efforts of a Gandharva woman. Listen to the story attentively."

In the kingdom of Vaishali, there lived a skilled sculptor known as Kaladharan. His stone statues were so lifelike and realistic that they appeared divine. One night, on a full moon day, he was sleeping on the terrace when a beautiful young woman appeared in his dream.

She asked, "Would you fulfill my desire? Carve my form out of a stone. I would very much appreciate it."

Entranced by her beauty, Kaladharan eagerly responded, "Certainly, I will carve your lifelike representation in stone and present it to you on the next full-moon day."

As the dream ended, the memory of the shapely woman lingered in his mind. Determined to complete the task, Kaladharan worked tirelessly day and night, carving the block of stone at the outskirts of the city, surrounded by mountains and near a waterfall, to be ready by the next full-moon day.

The woman in the dream was Nilanjana, a celestial

being from Gandharva Loka. Every full moon day, she and her companions made rounds on the earth. She appeared in the dream of the earthling Kaladharan on one of those moonlit nights and asked him to carve her life-size statue. With her companions, she left as usual for the earth on a full moon day. She took her companions to Trisangam of Vaishali Rajyam and showed them the statue and narrated the story behind it.

Admiring the statue, a confidante said, "If this statue has life, another Nilanjana will appear on earth." Another one addressed Nila, "Nila! Give it life." Another one said, "Give your mind and intellect to this statue." Nilanjana answered them, "If I give my life to the statue, what will come of me?"

Another companion: "Not so. We sport extraordinary powers. You will give, for a limited time, your life, mind, and intellect to the statue. Concurrently, your life, mind, and intellect will remain with you. You will shine as the original in Gandharva Loka and an Avatar on earth."

Nilanjana said, "This is a perverse play." The companions advised her, "For some time, you accomplish many things with your mind and later destroy the worldly Avatar Nilanjana." Nilanjana liked that suggestion and, by her power, shared her life, mind, and intellect with the statue.

The statue acquired life and became the worldly Nilanjana. As if she woke up from sleep, she went

to the city, walking all night and thinking of showing off her capabilities. She reached a forest at dawn. There, a tiger jumped on her, and in the next moment, an arrow flew into the tiger. Nilanjana, looking for her savior, turned around and saw at a distance a young man on a horse carrying arrows coming towards her. As he neared her, he asked her, "What are you doing in this forest?"

At first sight enamored by the youth, Nilanjana said, "I am on my way to the town looking for a job, only to be intercepted by this tiger. Thank you for saving my life. If I only had a sword, I would have killed this tiger."

The youth, with surprise in his voice, said, "Woman! Can you wield a sword?" She said, "My name is Nilanjana. I know the use of all weapon systems. I will meet the king of Vaishali and ask him to recruit me into the armed services."

The youth said, "My name is Prabakaran. It is apparent you are an intellectual. They will not admit a woman into the armed forces. Therefore, you should impersonate man and wear men's clothes. I am also headed to the city to join the military. Avanti Rajya king has invaded the country. Therefore, our king is actively recruiting soldiers. Go with me. I will take you there."

Both met with the chief of the army and joined the army. When the king and the general were discussing the conduct of war, Nilanjana entered the room and advised the king, "Maharaja! The

enemies are numerically superior, and it is impossible to defeat them. If we create confusion in the enemy's camp, we can defeat them. I have a plan with me." She presented it and explained it to the king.

The king was astonished at her presentation. The king made a division of the army and made her the general. She took her men up the hill, stationed them on the mountains on either side of the battlefield. As the fighting resumed the next day, snakes and scorpions descended upon the enemies from nowhere.

From another mountain, a barrage of torches descended on the enemies. This resulted in confusion among the enemy soldiers. The enemy soldiers, not knowing what to do, withdrew and ran away. The king invited the responsible person to the palace to shower him with accolades. When the king was alone, Nilanjana removed her disguise.

She said to the king, "King! I apologize that I wore men's clothes to join the army." Unexpectedly, the childless king was happy and surprised, adopted Nilanjana as his daughter, made her the princess, and married her to Prapārakar, as per her wish.

Because of her acumen, the Avatar of Nilanjana became the princess and was ecstatic. In the Gandharva Loka, Nilanjana spoke of her Avatar very proudly. The Gandharva Loka women thought that Nilanjana's play was over. The Nilanjana of the celestial world came to earth to turn Avatar back to

a statue, after explaining the story. The real Nilanjana said to her Avatar that she was ready to take her life. But the Avatar refused to comply with her request.

2023-19SnakeDiamond myindiastories.com

Undaunted in his efforts, Vikraman went up the tree again, brought down the hanging body to the ground, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam (ghost) inside the body addressed Vikraman, saying, "Dear king, with a dharmic mind, you suffer hardships, wander in the dense forest, hills, and the funeral grounds in the midnight hour when even the ghosts are afraid to venture out. Though the sastras declare that Dharma alone wins, in most cases, duplicity alone wins, in my opinion. To prove it, let me tell you a story."

In Kadambavanam, two young herders, Kannan and Rangan, cared for the cows and lived. One evening, one of the cows went missing. Rangan told Kannan to take his cows home while he went looking for the lost cow. Rangan entered the forest, and suddenly a tiger charged towards him, prompting Rangan to climb up a tree.

Soon darkness enveloped the forest. Thinking it was useless to look for the lost cow, he noticed a cobra emerge from the base of a nearby bush, sporting a scintillating and bright eye-catching diamond on its head.

The cobra slithered out of the bush, went to

Kannan's tree, unloaded the diamond at the base of the tree, moved out, and rested a few trees away. Suddenly, the cobra morphed into a man. The man, appearing like a Nagadeva (snake-deity), sat down under a tree, shut his eyes, and went into meditation. Seeing this sight, Rangan thought danger lurked there, descended from the tree with utmost silence, and ran away towards his village.

The next day, Rangan told this episode to Kannan, and Kannan's eyes opened wide. Kannan told Rangan, "What an idiot you are! If we possess the Naganatinam (Snake-diamond), we can save those with snakebites. If we make it a profession, we can rake in a lot of money and become very rich. Nothing bad has happened. Tonight, we both go to where you were in the forest. If what happened yesterday occurs again, we could steal the diamond and run out of there fast."

Rangan refused to go with Kannan. So, Kannan went alone to the forest. As expected, the cobra came out of the bush. Nagadeva was in deep meditation. Kannan came down the tree silently, picked up the diamond, and returned to Kadambavanam.

The next day, Kannan left his village, walked a long distance, and reached another village. Zamindar's daughter, bitten by a snake, was saved by Kannan with the help of the Snake-diamond. The zamindar, in appreciation of his service, arranged for a house in the village, where Kannan stayed.

In that area, abounding in forests and cultivation fields, there were many snakebites, and people came to Kannan seeking his lifesaving services. The fees paid to him made him extremely rich.

The next day, Nagadevan, cheated by Kannan, woke up from his Tapas and not finding his diamond, was agitated. Sudendiran, the snake deity, was in love with a woman whom he wanted to marry and built a castle in the air, only to see it fall. How he met his love was an interesting episode.

Indu, the daughter of a farmer, had beautiful looks. Spreading the unhusked rice in front of her hut's entrance, she was chasing the birds away from eating the paddy. At that time, a youth was passing by. Mesmerized by her beauty, he begged her to marry him, but she refused.

Angered by her refusal, he quarreled with her, and she yelled to attract attention from the passers-by. There was no one to come to help. The snake-deity Sudendiran, watching this, took pity on the helpless Indu, took the snake's form, spread the hood, came to him hissing. The youth took off running out of there. Indu looked at the snake with gratitude, and suddenly, the snake changed into a man.

Sudendiran stood before her as an attractive young man and said, "Dear lady! My name is Sudendiran. I come from Nagalokam (The world of snakes), and therefore, I am a Nagadeva (snake deity). I own a diamond, and because of its power, I assumed a

man's form and stood before you as such. I cannot remain a human permanently. I would try to assume a permanent human form. Until then, would you wait for me?" Indu concurred with him.

Sudendiran, happy at the prospect of marrying the young woman, went to Muni Sukranandar's hermitage and told him of his desire. Thinking about it for a while, the Muni (Root word Maunam = silence. Muni = Sadhu, saint) said, "Dear Sudendira! God gave every living being a form for a good reason. You belong to the World of Snakes. Therefore, it is mandatory for you to remain in snake form. Therefore, give up your desire."

Sudendiran told Muni about his love for Indu. The Muni told him, "I will find out how deep your love is for her. I will try to make your desire come true. By the power of my Tapas (austerity), you will remain a man throughout the night and must perform Tapas, meditating on the Paramporul (the Supreme Entity). Conduct yourself in a benevolent fashion to benefit all life forms. Over a period of days, you will become a man."

As he was doing the Tapas in the nights, one night, the diamond was stolen. Because of it, he lost his power and became a snake again. Sudendiran was bent on reaping vengeance on the thief of the diamond.

Kannan, prospering in another village, came to Kadambavanam to see his old friends like Rangan. He narrated all that happened in his life and made

an offer, "I am rich and prosperous. I did not forget your help. I want to give you half of my riches. Please come with me."

Rangan replied to Kannan, "Thank you, Kannan! I like to work and earn my living. Thanks." Kannan returned to his village. On his way, Sudendiran saw Kannan. The Diamond sakthi (power) drew Sudendiran (now in the form of the snake) who was angry at Kannan for stealing his diamond from him, and he bit Kannan. What a surprise! Sudendiran morphed into a man. At the same time, though bitten by the snake, the poison did not affect Kannan.

Vedalam stopped telling the story and posed a question to King Vikraman, "King Vikraman! How was it that the poison did not afflict selfish Kannan? Even more surprising is Sudendiran morphed from a snake to a man once he bit Kannan. Rangan thought his way of life and work with duty, honor, and integrity was proper. But he never prospered. Would this be the fate of those on the righteous path? If you know the answers but remain silent, your head will explode into one hundred pieces."

Vikraman answered, "Man's deeds yield appropriate fruits. The motivation of the deed, the circumstances, the doer's sins and merits determine the outcome. Rangan chose hard work and lived a happy life. Though Kannan stole the diamond, he performed meritorious deeds of saving the lives of snakebite victims with the power of the

diamond.

"Kannan was good-hearted because he went in search of his friend Rangan and offered to share his riches. Because of it, snake Sudendirian bite did not cause Kannan's death. Sudendirian went against the Tapasvin Sukranandar's advice and did not offer help to any living things. That being so, through his diamond, many lives were saved. For that reason, he attained a human form permanently."

Vikraman's correct reply and the ending of his silence prompted Vedalam to fly off his back and take refuge in the moringa tree. Vikraman continued his mission to apprehend the ghost and bring him back to the tantric.

In the end, Vikraman successfully accomplished his task, and the tantric was pleased with his bravery, wisdom, and compassion. The ghost was bound by the tantric's spells, and peace was restored to the kingdom.

As for Kannan and Sudendirian, they both found happiness in their own ways. Kannan, repenting for his past actions, used his wealth to help others and engage in acts of kindness. He became a respected and revered figure in his village, known for his generosity and benevolence.

Sudendirian, on the other hand, embraced his role as a snake deity once again. But he learned from his past mistakes and decided to use his powers to protect and aid those in need. He became known

as a guardian spirit, helping people who found themselves in dangerous situations and saving them from harm.

Rangan, true to his values, continued to work hard and live a simple life. While he didn't accumulate great wealth, he found contentment in the friendships he made and the joy he found in his daily work.

2023-20GoodEnemyTitle myindiastories.com

Good Enemy

Undaunted in his efforts, Vikraman went up the tree again, brought down the hanging body to the ground, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam (ghost) inside the body addressed Vikraman, saying, "Dear king, having friendship with our helpers and returning the favor to the helpers are natural. Our Sastras emphasize this relationship.

"In the story I am about to tell you, a recipient of great benefits expressed the idea of showing enmity to the benefactor, which was approved by the learned and realized Guru. Hear this story," Vedalam told the story.

In Vijayapuri, Saranyan, the rich man replete with auspicious qualities, was a humanitarian and a philanthropist. For many years, he did not have any children. But later, he had a son named Nambi, who grew up in luxury.

Nambi was intellectually impaired unlike other

children. His intellect was not sufficient to understand simple things. His father Saranyan believed a good school education in the top school would remedy the condition. But he remained dull in intellect. Though he had no confidence in Jodhism (astrology), Saranyan took him to a famous astrologist.

The astrologist said, "The planets are not aligned well for your son. If you relocate, he may return to a usual intellectual level. Take him to Guru Jñānēdirar in Vidyavanam. Studying in his Gurukulam (academy), he will become normal in his intellectual development."

Saranyan took his son Nambi to the academy. Jñānēdirar asked the youngster a few questions. The Guru said, "His understanding is according to his potential. I will try my best to make him think like others. You come back to me often to find out his progress."

Though Nambi continued to have an education in the academy, he made no progress. Sukumaran, a peasant's son, joined as a student in the Gurukulam. Being a highly intelligent student, Sukumaran earned the name of the best student in the academy.

Nambi tried to become friends with Sukumaran, but the latter did not accept Nambi as his friend. One year after Sukumaran joined the academy, he received news from home that the family was deep in debt. Sukumaran decided to end his studies mid-

semester. Just about that time, Saranyan was visiting his son Nambi, who told his father about Sukumaran's financial difficulties and his possible leaving the school. Saranyan met with Sukumaran and said to him, "Dear child! For an intelligent child like you, education should never be interrupted. I will take the responsibility of paying for your education. You continue your studies in the academy."

Sukumaran appreciated Nambi's good nature and his father's lofty ideals. Immediately Sukumaran went to Nambi and extended his hand of friendship. He said, "Nambi! You are also an intelligent person. In addition, you are a good person. Therefore, I like to have you as my friend. Hereafter, I will try to understand how you grasp the teaching in the Gurukulam."

Hearing for the first time from Sukumaran that he was intelligent and becoming happy, Nambi presented to Sukumaran what his understanding was of the subjects taught in the academy. For a year, Nambi listened to the teacher and explained it to Sukumaran. Within one year, Nambi began thinking and analyzing like other children.

Jñānēdirar realized the change in Nambi was due to Sukumaran, asked him, "How were you able to change Nambi?"

Sukumaran said, "Dear Guru, It takes no skill to make fun of someone with intellectual impairment. It takes intelligence, skill, imagination, and effort to change Nambi for the better, making him equal to

me."

Jñānēdirar praised Sukumaran and said, "You are the most upright child. You changed Sukumaran, taking a special interest. If your father learns of this, he will help you more." Sukumaran said, "No, please do not tell my father. He has done enough, and let this be an equitable return."

Saranyan, Nambi's father, besides paying for Sukumaran's education, visited the village of the father of Sukumaran, paid off all his debts, and saved him from financial disaster. Saranyan came to know of his problems. The near relatives swindled him and thus deprived him of his wealth.

Saranyan kept Sukumaran informed of these matters. Sukumaran was upset with his relatives because of the cheating of his father by the relatives. He even thought of discontinuing his studies when Saranyan, Nambi's father, came to rescue him. When the five-year study was complete for Sukumaran, Nambi, and others, Sukumaran came to the Guru to wish him good-bye. The Guru said to him, "Sukumaran! You are a virtuous person. You will be a good person forever as you are now."

Sukumaran answered, "Guru! Thinking of my relatives wanting to push my father into financial ruin distresses me. Only after reaping vengeance, I will try to become a good man." Jñānēdirar said, "Son, there is no end to inflicting vengeance for wrongdoing. Listen to me. Forgive them! Then only,

you can live your life in tranquility."

Saranyan showed up at that moment, became aware of what transpired, and said to Sukumaran, "I have so far thought of you as my son. Hereafter, I will help you to carry out your work, whatever it may be." Jñānēdirar interrupted and said, "Ayya! Do not ask Sukumaran what help he needs. You should ask your son Nambi, the pundit about it." Jñānēdirar called Nambi, narrated his conversation with Sukumaran, and asked him about his position in the matter.

Nambi answered, "If my father wants to help, he should become the enemy of Sukumaran. That is my suggestion." That answer made the other three alarmed. Nambi turned to Sukumaran and said, "Sukumaran! You forgot the help given by my father and consider him your enemy. Try to wreak vengeance on my father. Later, pay attention to your relatives and wreak vengeance."

Hearing what Nambi said, his father and Sukumaran were shocked, but the Guru smiled as if he understood it and concurred with his suggestion. Vedalam stopped the story at that moment and directed the question to Vikraman, "Vikraman! Nambi was known to be intellectually deficient. He babbled saying to treat the helpers as enemies. But why did the polymath Guru Jñānēdirar concur with Nambi's suggestion? If you know the answer to the question and remain silent, your head will explode into 100 pieces."

Vikraman, the king carrying the dead body and the Vedalam on the shoulder, said, "Sukumaran, the son of the farmer, is an intellectual and a good soul. The thought that his relatives were hypocrites and depraved people with no redeeming qualities was the reason for Sukumaran's anger. If Sukumaran has to forget to take vengeance, he should first explore the good qualities in his relatives. If he has to develop that kind of mental attitude, a charitable person like Saranyan should become his enemy."

"If Saranyan becomes his enemy, Sukumaran will not develop enmity towards him. Sukumaran will bring back all the good deeds of Saranyan to his memory and forgive him. Therefore, his thought of revenge will dissipate gradually. That is why Nambi advised Sukumaran to regard his father as his enemy. Nambi's suggestion was not absurd by any means. It was a brilliant suggestion."

Comment by Krishnaraj:

Sukumaran wants to wreak vengeance on his relatives because they stole from his father, thus causing distress to his father, impediments to his welfare and education, and dependence on Saranyan to pay for his education. Sukumaran's enmity towards Saranyan, his benefactor, appears contrived and illogical. The 12th-century author, I presume, employs Displacement Theory (a psychological tool), which in this case is making Saranyan the enemy in place of Sukumaran's relatives. It is unlikely that Sukumaran's enmity

towards Saranyan is real or severe and therefore will dissipate quickly. The enmity towards Sukumaran's relatives may have consequences, which will be absent concerning enmity towards Saranyan. In chemistry, biology, and medicine, we make use of competitive displacement, where, by a medication, we replace lead in the blood with calcium so that the poisonous lead is removed from the body and replaced with calcium.

Vikraman's correct answer and breaking of silence made Vedalam fly away, taking residence on the moringa tree.

With the puzzle solved, Vikraman continued his journey with newfound wisdom. The story of Sukumaran and Nambi had taught him valuable lessons about forgiveness, understanding, and the power of compassion. He realized that sometimes, showing enmity to someone could be a way to change their perspective and ultimately foster reconciliation and harmony.

As the king, Vikraman vowed to promote the teachings of the wise Guru Jñānēdirar, spreading the message of empathy and forgiveness throughout his kingdom. From that day on, he governed with a compassionate heart, treating his subjects as friends rather than mere subjects.

In the end, the story of Sukumaran and Nambi became a timeless tale, remembered for generations, serving as a reminder of the transformative power of goodwill and the goodness

that lies within every individual.

And so, Vikraman's journey continued, filled with newfound understanding and compassion, as he carried out his duties as a just and benevolent ruler, seeking to be a beacon of hope and kindness for all his people.

2023-21NoDesireForRichesTitle
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Don't Want Riches?

Undaunted in his efforts, Vikraman went up the tree again, brought down the hanging body to the ground, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. The Vedalam (ghost) inside the body addressed Vikraman, saying, "Now, I am unable to tell you what your future will be because if you were like Ramanathan, you will lose what you attained with great difficulty. But once he attained his goal with extraordinary difficulty, he gave up on it. Hear me tell that story.

Ramanathan, a youth who lived in Mayanur, had his fortune foretold by a palmist Swamiyar passing through the village. The palmist predicted that fortune would come seeking him. From then on, Ramanathan abandoned his job and began dreaming of riches yet to be in his possession. Another man came looking for him and made an enticing offer: "If you work for five years in the place I name, you will gain plenty of riches. Are you willing?"

Ramanathan demanded full details, and Anandan explained the offer. Sripuram's Anandan desired to marry a girl from the same village, but her father demanded a thousand gold coins as a dowry from prospective husbands. Anandan did not have that amount of gold with him. Saravanan, the village merchant, invited Anandan to work in his house for five years to earn one thousand gold coins.

Anandan accepted the job. A few days after he joined, a strange disease afflicted him, making him look unattractive in his body and face. The girl rejected him, and he decided to become a Sannyasin (ascetic). That idea did not appeal to Saravanan. Anandan told Saravanan that he was going on a pilgrimage to temple towns and on return, he would do his job.

In Biruhadhāranyam, Anandan met Rishi Pirakandar. He expressed his desire to become a Sannyasi and asked the Rishi to initiate him. Pirakandar assured him, "Your disfigurement is temporary, and I will teach you the Dhana Mantram (prosperity Mantra), which, when recited, will lead you to a buried treasure. After acquiring the treasure and still not desiring to enjoy wealth, you will be eligible to become a Sannyasin. If you waste your austerities within a year under the influence of emotions, you will not become a Sannyasin." The Rishi taught him the Mantra.

Anandan established his own Asrama (Hindu monastery/hermitage) and continuously recited the Dhana Mantra. In a few days, his internal vision

pointed to the base of a pipal tree as the treasure site. One day, a young woman named Nilambari sought refuge with Anandan. She explained that she was poor but led a luxurious life, and a young man named Somu desired to marry her without paying any dowry. Since he was poor, she rejected him, but her father approved of him. Nilambari ran away and sought refuge with Anandan. He agreed to help her safeguard the buried treasure for one year, after which he would help her acquire it.

One day, Somu, still wanting to marry Nilambari, visited her at the hermitage. He pestered her again to marry him. Nilambari told him, "If you kill Anandan, we can take the buried treasure, get married, and live happily." Anandan overheard this on his way back from a bath in the river. He appeared before her and said, "For mere money, you wanted to kill me. Therefore, you will become an ogress."

Rishi Pirakandar, passing by, looked at Anandan and said, "Since you cursed Nilambari, you lost the power gained by Tapas." Anandan begged Rishi, "Swamy! I lost faith in mankind. Please make me a Sannyasin immediately."

Rishi Pirakandar said to Anandan, "What happened to the promise you made to Saravanan? You must appoint someone in your place to work for him. Give Sāpa Vimōsanam (= Curse expiation) to Nilambari. After that, we will talk about Sannyasam." Anandan pleaded, "Can't you do me a favor?" Rishi said, "Nilambari ventured to kill you

because of greed for the buried treasure. In an equitable manner, anyone who thinks of money as inconsequential and donates money, through that donor Nilambari will obtain expiation and revert to a human. Her expiation will make you a Sannyasin."

Explaining these recent events to Ramanathan, Anandan told him he would take him to Saravanan. Hearing this, Ramanathan became enthusiastic and joined Saravanan's employment. He soon realized how hard it was to work in his house. One day, the woman of the house told Ramanathan, "A cook by the name of Chandra lives in this village. You must somehow convince her to come here and do the cooking. If you fail to bring her, I will dismiss you from your work."

Chandra initially refused to go along with Ramanathan's plea. To persuade her, he promised to share one thousand gold coins with her after five years. Stubborn Chandra said, "I don't need your money, but since your situation is pitiable, I agree to help you."

Chandra came to Saravanan's house and did all the cooking. She also helped Ramanathan with other jobs. Over time, Ramanathan's perspective on money changed. He began to value the companionship of Chandra more than any wealth.

Five years later, Ramanathan went to Anandan and said, "On your behalf, I completed working in that house, but I do not need those one thousand gold

coins. You can keep them. I feel that Chandra is my biggest treasure." Ramanathan's statement surprised Anandan. Rishi Pirakandar, coming there, blessed Ramanathan, and at that moment, Nilambari received expiation from the curse and reverted to her original form.

Vedalam stopped the storytelling and said, "King Vikraman! Desirous of money, Ramanathan toiled in Saravanan's house for five years and at the end, gave up the claim on one thousand gold coins. Why did he do it? Anandan did nothing, and Nilambari received expiation from the curse. Why is it so? What did Ramanathan do to receive Rishi's blessings with his heart, mind, and soul? Though you know the answers, if you remain silent, your head will explode into one hundred pieces."

King Vikraman answered the Vedalam, "Ramanathan's desire for wealth is true. Since he met Chandra, he had a change of heart and mind. His liking for riches diminished, ever since Chandra rejected his offer of gold coins but helped him out of compassion. Because of that, he sacrificed the gold, though deserving. Due to his sacrifice, Nilambari attained expiation from the curse. What else can Rishi Pirakandar do other than bless Ramanathan?"

Because of Vikraman's correct answer and the cessation of silence, Vedalam flew back to the moringa tree.

Undaunted in his efforts, Vikraman went up the tree again, brought down the hanging body to the ground, and carried it on his shoulders to the funeral grounds. Inside the body, the Vedalam (ghost) addressed Vikraman, saying, "King! I don't understand why you roam in the middle of the night in the terrifying forest. King Yasodharan suffered from a curse inflicted by a Gandharva with no connection at all. Let me tell you Gandharvan's story."

King Yasodharan of Rishādhapuri's ruled his country with the welfare of the people in his mind. However, the fierce forest animals at the edge of the kingdom often entered the villages and caused trouble to the villagers. Considering hunting them down, one day he, along with his soldiers, entered the forest.

While Yasodharan was hunting, a Gandharva man and woman descended on the top of a nearby hill to take rest. Amaran, the Gandharva, loved the Gandharvi Sarmila. Amaran addressed Sarmila, saying, "Sarmila! Look at the natural beauty below us. But none can surpass your beauty."

She did not pay any attention to him, only enjoying watching King Yasodharan chase the animals. Jealousy burned in his heart, and he said to her, "Being entranced by your beauty, I am painting you, while you are enjoying the beauty of a mere man. See what I will do to him." He cast a curse on Yasodharan.

Immediately, Yasodharan became a dwarf, shocking and surprising him. A rabbit running by him dashed into him and made him do somersaults. Gandharva Amaran laughed violently and said to Sarmila, "Did you see him? His condition is pathetic."

Sarmila cried, "What have you done? I only enjoyed seeing him fly like the wind on his horse, but I was not taken by his beauty. Are you that jealous?" Soon she took off into the sky, and Amaran, to propitiate her, soon followed her.

At that moment, a fierce wind blew, lifting the foot-tall king into the air. Afflicted by fear, Yasodharan caught hold of the parrot's tail feathers during its flight. The parrot was the pet of Princess Rāgaladhā from the neighboring kingdom. When the princess was playing ball with her companions, she saw the strange sight of a foot-tall man holding onto the parrot's tail.

Rāgaladhā had never seen a foot-tall man with a pea-size crown and mustard-seed-size eyes before. She stared at him without blinking her eyes, and her companions shouted, "What a wonder!" Rāgaladhā caught Yasodharan in her palm and, seeing him move, said, "Aha! It looks like a living doll."

Yasodharan saw her up close and was taken by her beauty. He decided that if he ever married, she would be the one.

Yasodharan, now the diminutive king in the palm of

Rāgaladhā, said, "Rajakumari! I don't even know how I got this form and size. I am the hero of heroes! Someday, I will regain my own form and size."

The princess's companions made fun of him, saying, "This foot-tall man talks big from his lofty height." Rāgaladhā shushed them.

The princess decided to keep the diminutive king in the harem and spent time with him every day in secret. Rāgaladhā was skilled at drawing forms and figures, and she imagined how tall and handsome Yasodharan would be if he were like everybody else. She drew his form.

After she completed the drawing, Yasodharan saw it from behind and said, "Rāgaladhā, one day, I will change into your depiction in your drawing. The other day, I wanted to tell you, but I will say it now. I am in love with you. When I attain my own form and size, I will marry you." Hearing this, Rāgaladhā covered her face in modesty.

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